

Improvement Plan Concepts

This chapter describes improvements recommended to achieve the community's vision of a more livable neighborhood, consistent with the Goals and Objectives in the previous chapter. The improvement recommendations are the result of community meetings and workshops with the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) and neighborhood residents between February, 2001 and March, 2002.

Recommended improvements address the neighborhood's physical condition, security, land use and circulation. Specific steps for implementing the improvement concepts are detailed in the Action Plan chapter. Improvement recommendations follow the organization of the Goals and Objectives, with five main categories:

- **Neighborhood Circulation and Parking**
- **Neighborhood Parks and Open Space**
- **Neighborhood Conditions and Maintenance**
- **Neighborhood Security**
- **Neighborhood Development**

Neighborhood Circulation and Parking

A major concern of neighborhood residents is the volume and perceived speed of traffic within the Spartan Keyes area. The proximity of the neighborhood to Interstate 280, Highway 101, San Jose State University, and Spartan Stadium results in significant amounts of non-local through-traffic. In addition, college and professional sporting events at Spartan Stadium produce large amounts of overflow parking. Circulation and parking improvements recommendations focus on improving neighborhood-oriented vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and preserving on-street parking for residents during special events.

Vehicular Circulation

Traffic Calming Studies

Neighborhood traffic calming studies should be conducted to evaluate current traffic patterns and recommend improvements in vehicular circulation, with a focus on improving the quality of life for neighborhood residents. Traffic calming involves a combination of techniques, including physical design measures that reduce the negative impacts of vehicular traffic, thereby improving street conditions for all users. The north south connectors that traverse the neighborhood at 2nd Street, 3rd Street, 7th Street, 10th Street, 11th Street, and 12th Street are of particular concern because of the volume and relative speed of through traffic associated with the I-280 entrance and exit ramps. Residents would like an evaluation of existing street conditions,

such as the free left turn at Humboldt and 11th, and the free right turn at Keyes/11th, which they feel can encourage higher speeds and further complicates the coordination between vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. Also at issue is the minimum amount of stop signs or signals on the one-way couplets, which makes pedestrian crossings difficult in the residential core of the neighborhood and further separates the community.

The Department of Transportation (DOT), in cooperation with a group of neighborhood residents, has begun an evaluation of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood with regards to vehicular circulation and traffic improvements. Traffic consultants are currently evaluating traffic generation and level of service at key intersections within the East Gardner Specific Plan Area, and the City also has completed a couplet study that includes the Spartan Keyes area. Proposed traffic calming studies should build and expand upon these efforts and incorporate the entire Spartan Keyes Strong Neighborhoods area. Localized traffic calming needs and solutions should be determined in close coordination with community members most affected by the traffic issues and solutions.



Heavy through traffic is a significant concern for local residents.

Truck Traffic

In addition to the large volume of non-local vehicles, Spartan Keyes residents experience heavy traffic from trucks serving the light and heavy industrial businesses south of the neighborhood, as well as within the neighborhood itself. Trucks traverse residential streets, especially 7th, 10th and 11th Streets, for access to and from I-280, detracting from the appeal of the neighborhood and increasing noise and pollution levels. Residents south of Keyes Street are inconvenienced when truck drivers double-park on residential streets, blocking parked cars and driveways, while they stop for lunch and/or other errands and deliveries. Community members have expressed the desire to have truck traffic rerouted outside of the neighborhood

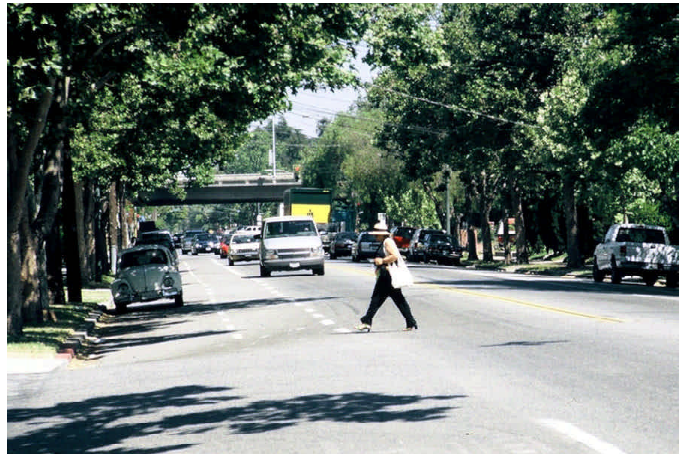
and restrictions placed on drivers to prevent double-parking on residential streets. Residents feel that this would alleviate some of the traffic congestion and help to promote pedestrian and bicycle circulation within the area.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Pedestrian Corridors

An important goal of this *Plan* is to encourage pedestrian activity throughout Spartan Keyes. Establishing a safe and aesthetically pleasing pedestrian network within the area will promote activity and enhance the livability of the neighborhood. The two main pedestrian corridors within Spartan Keyes are Martha Street and Keyes Street. These streets connect residential areas to commercial centers, public facilities, and/or proposed neighborhood parks and open space. Streetscape improvements such as enhanced crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, shade trees, trash

receptacles, and other elements should be installed to enhance the safety and comfort of pedestrians. New development along these corridors should incorporate widened sidewalks (6' + along Martha Street, 10-15' along Keyes Street) with planting strips where feasible to accommodate trees and buffer traffic. Improvements proposed in the *East Gardner Specific Plan* should be considered for the entire length of Martha Street and Keyes Street.



Current traffic patterns and street intersections are not conducive to pedestrian circulation.

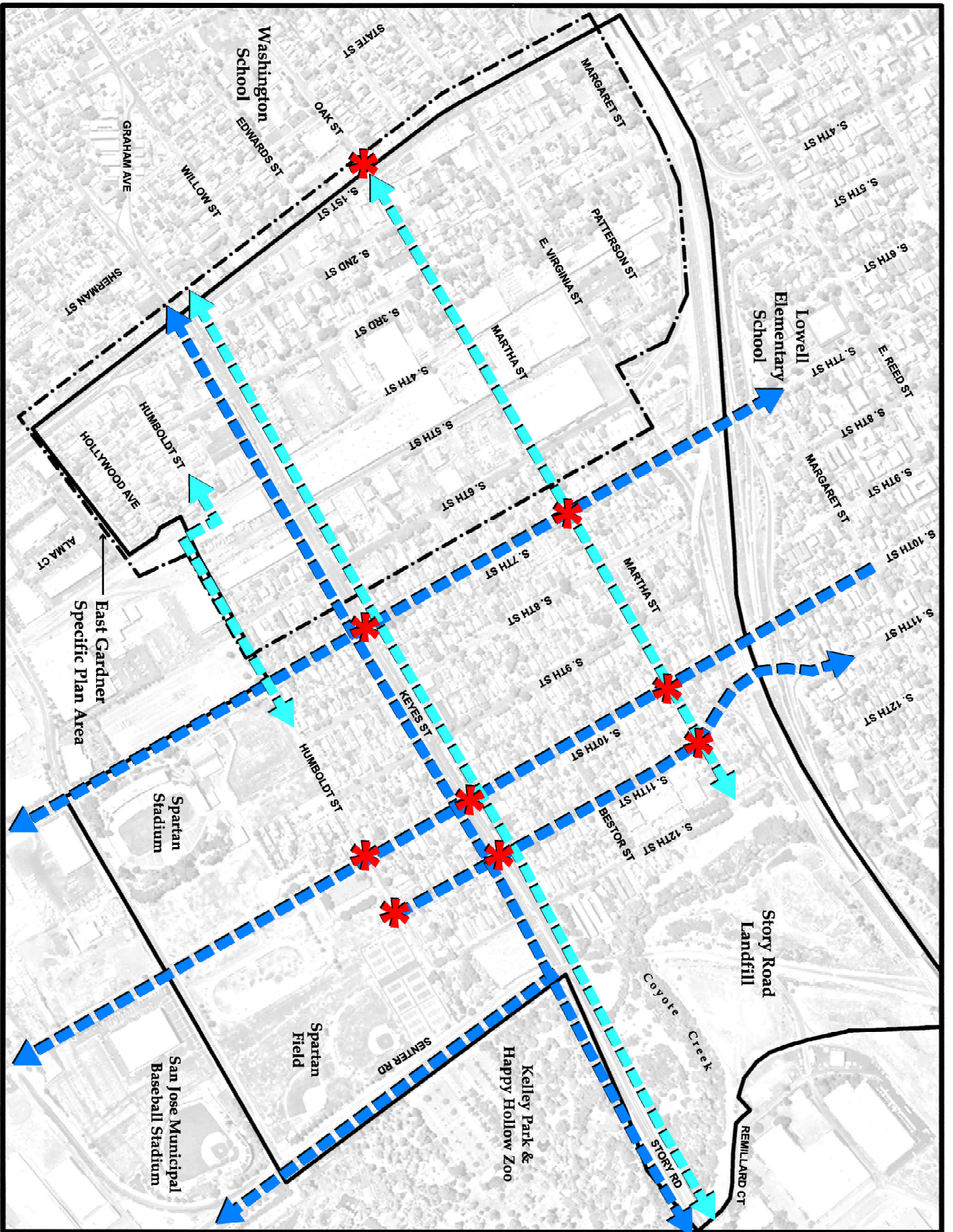
Although this plan primarily addresses the area within its Strong Neighborhoods Initiative boundary, it is important to recognize the connection between Spartan Keyes and adjoining neighborhoods. The Tully/Senter area to the east incorporates major commercial centers along Story Road, an extension of Keyes Street. However, these centers are not pedestrian accessible due to a substantial absence of sidewalks along the north side of Story Road. Sidewalks should be constructed and lighting added along this corridor to allow for safe and comfortable pedestrian circulation. In addition, residents in the University neighborhood, north of Spartan Keyes, have identified 7th Street and 11th Street as key pedestrian corridors for their area. Streetscape improvements proposed in the updated *University Neighborhoods Revitalization Plan* should be extended into Spartan Keyes to provide continuity and strengthen the connection between the two neighborhoods.

Pedestrian Crossings

Street crossings should be improved along the main street corridors to increase safety, visibility, and encourage pedestrian activity. Depending on location, improved crossings could include corner sidewalk bulb-outs, enhanced striping, signal lights, pavement lights and signage. Community members identified eight key intersections where pedestrian crossings should be improved:

- Martha/7th
- Martha/10th
- Martha/11th
- Martha/1st
- Keyes/7th
- Keyes/10th
- Keyes/11th
- Humboldt/10th
- Humboldt/11th

Each of these intersections should be evaluated by the City to determine the most effective method for enhancing the pedestrian crossing. Consideration should be given to both current and future neighborhood destinations, such as proposed neighborhood parks and public facilities, which will increase pedestrian traffic.



Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

In addition to the evaluation of these intersections, residents would like to establish stronger pedestrian connections between the Hollywood/Humboldt area and the Spartan Keyes neighborhood to the north and east. Pedestrian improvements along Keyes Street and 5th and 6th Streets should substantially enhance neighborhood connections across Keyes Street. The eastern connection of Hollywood/Humboldt to Spartan Keyes, across an existing two-block separation, is more challenging. Some kind of well-designed pedestrian route should be created to span this gap. The East Gardner Specific Plan is proposing new public streets as the preferred alignment for these pedestrian connections.

School Access

Children from Spartan Keyes attend Lowell Elementary School, north of I-280 at 7th Street and Margaret, and Washington Elementary at State Street and Oak Street, west of the neighborhood across 1st Street. Although these schools are within walking distance for much of the neighborhood, children and adults must walk along busy through streets, cross I-280 on- and off-ramps, and pass under the freeway, or cross heavy traffic on 1st Street, often during peak hours. The intersections identified in the previous section are key to providing safe routes to school as well as enhancing the pedestrian network. Traffic movements, signal timing, and other aspects of pedestrian circulation should be evaluated and modified as needed to improve crossings along the most commonly used routes to school.

The San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) provides three school bus stops in the southern portion of the neighborhood to serve Lowell and Washington Elementary school students; these are located on 7th Street, 10th Street and 12th Street. Residents have expressed a concern for the safety of children waiting to take the bus at stops that are poorly defined and located on busy streets. The City should coordinate with the SJUSD to evaluate the feasibility of increasing safety and visibility at neighborhood bus stops.

Bicycle Routes

Residents have expressed a strong desire to increase the availability of safe bicycle routes, both within the Spartan Keyes area and to public and recreational facilities outside the neighborhood. Bike routes should be established and/or enhanced along Keyes Street, Martha Street, 7th Street, 10th Street and 11th Street, and connected to the San Jose Transportation Bicycle Network. Wherever possible, bike lanes should be separated from vehicular traffic with striping and signage.



School bus stops are located on streets with heavy traffic.



Bicycle routes should be established or enhanced where appropriate to visually separate bicycles from cars.

In addition to establishing bike routes, bike facilities should be provided at neighborhood destinations. Bike storage racks should be required for approval of new development and/or renovation plans for public facilities and commercial and residential projects. Proposed public parks and community buildings should include bicycle access and safe storage areas as part of the site plan.

Neighborhood Parking

Parking Conditions

Overflow parking from events at Spartan Stadium is a significant concern for local residents south of Keyes Street. The older homes that typify Spartan Keyes generally have detached single-car garages and short, narrow driveways, making additional on-street parking essential for residents and visitors. Although overflow parking has always been a neighborhood issue, recent years have seen a marked increase in the number of events held at the stadium with the introduction of the San Jose Earthquakes and the Bay Area CyberRays, which both use the facility as their home field. In addition, the University neighborhood to the north of Spartan Keyes will soon initiate a residential parking permit program that will displace approximately 700 student vehicles. This may result in an increase in overflow parking within Spartan Keyes during school hours.

Residents have explored the idea of establishing a residential parking permit program in the past, but there was not sufficient interest to initiate the application process. Changes in the Spartan Stadium schedule and the introduction of residential parking permits in adjacent neighborhoods may prompt a reevaluation of the residential parking permit for portions of Spartan Keyes. The *Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Association* should work with the Department of Transportation to evaluate non-local parking volumes and identify key areas where parking permits may be necessary. DOT should inform residents of the procedures involved in establishing a parking permit program and assist homeowners in the application process if necessary.

Vehicle Abatement

Significant numbers of derelict and/or rarely used vehicles parked throughout the neighborhood has been a consistent problem. Residents would like to see an improved system for the removal of abandoned vehicles as well as a reduction in the number of cars permanently parked on the street, particularly those listed for sale. Improvement of this situation requires a significant degree of monitoring and follow-up by SJPd and Code Enforcement officers. Residents would like to see increased and sustained City efforts in vehicle abatement to reduce neighborhood blight and reduce parking congestion. The *Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Association* should coordinate with SJPd and Code Enforcement to identify locations where there is a pattern of vehicle abandonment or on-street storage. Residents should continue to report problem areas to Code Enforcement in order to focus attention on the issue.

Neighborhood Parks and Open Space

There are no City parks or public open spaces within the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Kelley Park and Happy Hollow Zoo are located to the south and east of the neighborhood, but are regional facilities oriented to residents from the City of San Jose as well as non-residents, and do not offer a broad enough range of activities for all age groups. Throughout the neighborhood planning process, a major objective has been to designate and develop sites for neighborhood-oriented open space and recreation. Residents would like to develop several neighborhood parks which would offer opportunities for both active and passive recreation.

Neighborhood Parks

Story Road Landfill

The Story Road Landfill consists of four separate parcels located along the eastern edge of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. In the 1970's, the City acquired the site from a private party who had been operating a landfill operation there since the 1950's. The City continued to use the site for landfill until the mid-1970's, when operations ceased. During the Strong Neighborhoods planning process, community members were given the opportunity to express a preference for future use of the site. Although further study of the landfill is necessary to determine feasible land uses, residents strongly recommended that at least a portion of the site be developed as a neighborhood park. Residents suggested developing a park with two distinct areas; one for active recreation, including soccer and baseball fields, and basketball courts, and a second for passive recreation with enhanced landscaping, seating areas, and walking trails for a more naturalized environment. Pedestrian access to the park from the neighborhood could be gained from Martha Street, by obtaining an easement through the Water Company property on 12th Street. The park design should focus on providing both ends of the recreation spectrum, with active recreation and passive naturalized open space.

Residents feel strongly that any sporting fields, facilities, and parking lots should be available free of charge to all members of the community. The specific programming for this park should be decided through a community based Parks Master Planning process. Development of the landfill for a public park would provide residents with



Residents would like the Story Road Landfill developed for neighborhood open space incorporating a trail along Coyote Creek.

much needed open space and improve the desirability and livability of the neighborhood.

The landfill park should incorporate a trail along Coyote Creek and/or the abandoned rail line to create pedestrian connections between the park, open spaces in adjacent neighborhoods, and greater San Jose. The design of the trail system should be coordinated with the park master plan process unless the site is determined to be unsuitable for open space development. In this case, development of the creek/rail trail should be pursued separately through the “Rails to Trails” program as part of a coordinated effort to create a city-wide trail system.

East Gardner Park

The East Gardner Specific Plan process has identified a site at the center of the area for development of a 4.8 acre park. Preliminary programming ideas include a large open green for outdoor recreation, and indoor spaces for recreation, education, and community meetings and events. The indoor activities are envisioned to occur in existing historic American Can Company buildings within the proposed site and should include community-oriented arts activities. Specific functions of the indoor space should be identified during the planning process to ensure adequate space for programs such as summer youth camps or after-school extended care. This park should focus on community-oriented activities to complement the recreational opportunities proposed at the Story Road Landfill site. Development of this park will require the acquisition of several privately owned properties, extensive building renovations, as well as a community based master plan. Residents would like to see the City pursue the required land acquisition as part of the redevelopment of the EGSP area.

Community Facilities

The most livable communities typically have a strong neighborhood center or focus. Although Spartan Keyes has an active arts community and neighborhood association, the area lacks spaces for residents to gather and interact on a regular basis. Residents would like to see community facilities developed within, and/or adjacent to the proposed open spaces. These facilities could include a traditional community center, educational center, day care/after school center, or even a public library. The American Can Company buildings located between Martha and Bestor Streets on the East Gardner Park site and/or space at a new neighborhood school have been identified as the preferred locations for these activities. Another alternative would be to include a community space as part of a new elementary school. The focus should be on creating physical spaces that promote casual gatherings as well as structured community events, to encourage a greater degree of social interaction between residents.

Remnant Open Spaces

Undeveloped Open Space

There are several small open spaces owned by various public entities that should be developed for general beautification to improve neighborhood appearance, especially along the I-280 corridor. The City should work with residents to develop a program for ornamental garden planting, regular trash collection, and weed abate-

ment in remnant open spaces that are too small to be considered for a formalized parks or community gardens. These efforts should include the addition of landscaping on parcels adjacent to the freeway to mitigate blight and create pleasing neighborhood gateways.

Ornamental Gardens

Residents have been actively participating in several garden projects within the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Three parcels within the area have been improved as ornamental gardens at; 6th/E. Virginia, and 7th/I-280. Although these sites have been landscaped and maintained by the community, residents would like support from the City to complete several Public Works related projects, such as new barrier fencing, curb reconstruction to define the site from the roadway, and improved storm water drainage to reduce ponding. Any undeveloped City owned lots within the neighborhood should be considered for additional ornamental garden sites.



Unmaintained parcels attract illegal dumping and create neighborhood blight.

Neighborhood Conditions and Maintenance

A basic neighborhood concern is the physical condition and maintenance levels of streets and properties. The appearance of streets and private properties influences how residents and non-residents perceive and treat the neighborhood. Recommended improvements focus on increasing the overall aesthetic quality of Spartan Keyes while supporting the neighborhood's traditional residential character.

Street Improvements

Streets and Sidewalks

Improvement is needed in the condition of neighborhood streets, sidewalks, curbs and gutters. The large volume of through traffic on primarily residential streets results in an unusual amount of wear to paving surfaces. As a result, streets have cracks, dips, and faded lane striping, giving the neighborhood a run-down appearance. Repairs to underground systems on major streets such as Keyes Street have left large patched roadway areas, which obliterate striping for parking and bike lanes and cause confusion and conflicts between bicyclists and motorists. Sidewalks are cracked and uneven in some places within the neighborhood and completely missing in others, particularly on Keyes Street between 3rd and 4th, adding to blight and impeding pedestrian circulation. Streets should be evaluated and necessary repairs made to correct safety issues and improve overall neighborhood appearance. The City's existing sidewalk program reimburses homeowners for the complete cost of sidewalk replacement, and can be an immediate solution to repairing damaged sidewalk sections in front of residential properties. The City should inspect sidewalk sections in front of commercial properties and light industrial businesses and follow-up with property owners to ensure the timely replacement of broken pavement.

Pedestrian Crosswalks

Several intersections have been previously identified for enhanced pedestrian crosswalks as part of establishing a greater neighborhood pedestrian network. In addition to these major intersections, each intersection within the residential portion of the neighborhood should be evaluated to ensure proper visibility and safety for pedestrians. Where available, crosswalk striping and stop bars should be well defined and clear to both motorists and pedestrians. Lines of sight should be maintained and/or improved to allow motorists an unobstructed view of corners and intersections.

Street Lighting

A well-lit neighborhood increases visibility, improves pedestrian safety, and encourages neighborhood activity. Residents feel strongly that increased lighting would greatly reduce anti-social behavior and improve safety in public areas and alleys. Major pedestrian corridor streets such as Martha Street and Keyes Street are recommended for pedestrian-oriented, traditional style street lights; lights should be located as appropriate to create a safe and pleasing pedestrian environment. Residential streets should also be well lit, especially those near the freeway and open spaces

to discourage loitering and illegal activity. Street lighting in these areas may include the addition of traditional “cobra head” lights to existing power poles to address immediate safety and visibility concerns. New development should incorporate ornamental, pedestrian-scale lights along street frontages.



While some streets are lined with mature street trees, others have few streetscape amenities.

Street Trees

One of the neighborhood’s most attractive assets is its collection of large mature street trees in the area north of Keyes Street. Street trees not only improve the appearance of streets, they also establish a neighborhood character and add to property values. Because Spartan Keyes is an older neighborhood, many streets have a planting strip between the sidewalk and the curb. However, street trees are sporadic in some areas, non-existent in others, particularly south of Keyes Street. Residents have expressed an interest in a neighborhood street tree program that would provide for the planting and maintenance of regularly spaced, residential scale trees along all neighborhood street frontages. This type of uniform planting will unify the neighborhood visually as well as add to property values.

Tree species, to be selected from a palette approved by the City Arborist, should be deciduous to provide shade in summer and sun in win-

ter, with deep, non-invasive roots. Trees should be located to provide sufficient clearance from streetlights and power lines to avoid unsightly “topping” and pruning. Overhead utility lines can be avoided by planting smaller species. Existing trees that are dead, diseased or inappropriate should be removed and replaced as part of this program. Healthy, mature trees should be preserved and property owners should be restricted from removing viable trees from the street frontage to maintain a continuous planting scheme. Regular maintenance such as trimming and removal of dead trees and branches that fall and block storm drains will ensure the long-term success of the program.

Noise

Freeway Noise

Noise from I-280 is a significant concern, especially in the northern portion of the neighborhood. In addition to freeway traffic, residents on 7th Street and 11th Street are effected by both on and off-ramps which generate a great deal of traffic. Indoor and outdoor decibel levels should be evaluated along the I-280 corridor to determine if noise levels exceed the City’s acceptable limits. Residents would like to explore all noise mitigation methods available to improve the neighborhood environment.

Soundwalls

The most common mitigation for freeway noise is a standard Caltrans soundwall, ranging from 6-16 feet in height depending on the location. Although soundwalls can be an effective tool in reducing some noise pollution, there can be ramifications to their use that need to be considered. Soundwalls do not eliminate noise; they redirect or bounce it towards other areas. Once the noise levels in key areas have been monitored, residents should be informed of the potential positive and negative impacts of the construction of soundwalls. The City and local residents who will be directly affected should determine the feasibility and desirability of soundwalls.

Local Traffic

Residents on the major through streets at 7th Street, 10th Street, 11th Street, and 12th Street experience a higher level of ambient noise than the rest of the neighborhood due to the speed and volume of traffic along these corridors. Although these streets are primarily residential, the majority of the traffic is non-local in origin, resulting in a constant stream of cars moving at speeds, which generally exceed neighborhood standards. Truck traffic from the industrial area to the south adds to the noise generation on these streets. Noise levels should be evaluated and mitigation measures, such as traffic calming and reduced speed limits, should be explored to help reduce the overall level of auditory disruption. Truck traffic and circulation should be addressed as part of the proposed traffic calming study.



Residents would like truck traffic to be routed around the neighborhood to minimize noise and improve local circulation conditions.

Residential Properties

Code Enforcement

Housing from 1900 to the 1930's typifies the northern portion neighborhood. In general, this development features narrow lots, smaller houses, and detached garages at the back of the property. Over time residents have attempted to expand living areas with additions and garage conversions. While investment in properties is encouraged, these renovations can lead to overcrowding, as individual households exceed the maximum number of residents for which the building was originally designed. Remodels and renovations that are not sensitive to the architectural character negatively affect the neighborhood's overall aesthetic. Residents feel that it is important that all renovations meet current code standards in order to maintain the current standard of living. Improving Code Enforcement will ensure that the community has a better understanding of regulations for proper uses of residential properties. This would help to bring all properties into alignment with the current codes as well as prevent future violations.



The established neighborhood character should be reflected in new development and building renovations.

Neighborhood Character

Residents feel strongly that renovations and new infill housing development should complement existing housing styles and blend with surrounding properties. The City of San Jose has established residential design guidelines that address issues such as appropriate building materials, architectural style, building height, bulk, and form. Although these guidelines will help guide residential infill, they do not address the renovation and reuse of the industrial and historic buildings in the East Gardner Specific Plan area. The City should apply a set of guidelines to cover the EGSP area, which focuses on preserving the existing industrial character of the area, and the concentration of original Victorian houses on the northern blocks of 3rd Street, while complementing the architecture of the adjacent single-family neighborhood. Guidelines should help direct the integration of the EGSP area with the existing residential neighborhoods to establish an aesthetically cohesive community.

Property Improvements

A key element in neighborhood aesthetics is the appearance and maintenance of residential properties. Spartan Keyes has many well-kept older homes that give the area a distinct character and exemplify homeowner pride in the neighborhood. A goal of this Plan is to increase the overall level of maintenance of private prop-

erties with regards to building and landscaping, to strengthen the appeal of the neighborhood. The City of San Jose has several programs available for existing homeowners, including a Homeowner Grant Program. Low-income homeowners can receive up to \$15,000 for home repairs while median income families can apply for low interest loans up to \$100,000. There is also a City Paint Grant Program that offers up to \$5,000 to qualified homeowners for exterior painting.

An important facet of homeowner assistance is the dissemination of information and program “marketing.” Improved outreach and communication between City departments and members of the community is essential. The Department of Housing should work with neighborhood groups to organize a better method for distributing information, such as mass mailings and regular informational meetings with local residents.

Neighborhood Security

A basic concern in every neighborhood is the level of safety that residents feel while carrying on their daily activities. Spartan Keyes residents identified illegal activity related to gangs, alcohol and drugs, as well as pedestrian safety and homeless encampments as neighborhood security issues that need to be addressed. Recommended improvements are intended to promote a safe and comfortable neighborhood environment that supports pedestrian activity and property values.

Anti-Social Activity

Police Presence

Spartan Keyes residents feel increased police presence is needed to deter loitering, drug related activity, and other anti-social behaviors. There have been concerns over the response time to resident complaints, especially with regard to drug-related transactions, prostitution, and related neighborhood disturbances. Residents have reported specific problems relating to activity in and around apartment complexes, bars, alleys, and freeway overpasses. An increase in the number of regular police patrols and faster response and follow-up to complaints is recommended to curb illegal activity within the neighborhood. Community members should coordinate with the SJPD to identify areas with the most significant problems to help focus police efforts.



Police patrols should be focused in areas where anti-social behavior and neighborhood disturbances are likely to occur.

Neighborhood Organizations

The *Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Association* should expand its involvement in security issues and facilitate the development of neighborhood organizations focused on improving resident safety. The formation of groups such as Neighborhood Watch

can provide regular, local supervision that support SJPd efforts. This “eyes on the street” approach could help police identify problem areas and correct situations on a timely basis. This effort will require consistent resident participation and neighborhood meetings to coordinate information and outreach, but when managed correctly groups such as these have proven effective in deterring illegal activity and anti-social behaviors.

Maintenance and Lighting

Residents would like to see better maintenance and lighting in areas with a history of illegal activity to promote supervision and make the sites less attractive to those wishing to hide from public view. The alley off Keyes Street between 7th and 8th and the rail line along 4th Street have traditionally been used for anti-social activity and homeless encampments. In addition, the freeway underpasses have a history of homeless sleeping in cars and prostitution. Providing safety lighting, such as motion sensitive lights mounted on fencing and “cobra head” lights under the freeway, would improve conditions for pedestrians as well as residents of adjacent properties. Regular removal of trash and illegally dumped materials should be coordinated to improve aesthetics of the Keyes Street alley and give the area a maintained feel. Residents should work with the City to identify any other areas in the neighborhood that could benefit from increased lighting and maintenance to deter undesirable activity and improve safety.

Freeway Crossings

Lighting

Interstate 280 runs along the northern edge of the neighborhood, separating Spartan Keyes from adjacent neighborhoods, SJSU, and Downtown. Undercrossings at 7th Street, 10th Street, and 11th Street are long and poorly-lit, creating dark enclosed spaces, especially at night. The lack of lighting has made these areas attractive locations for homeless encampments, loitering, and anti-social activity. Undermounted safety lights and/or pedestrian scale streetlights should be considered to improve visibility, safety, and to enhance appropriate pedestrian activity.

Pedestrian Safety

I-280 on and off-ramps limit the pedestrian network, creating less than desirable crossing situations. As previously discussed, children must pass under the freeway at 7th Street on their way to Lowell Elementary School. Enhanced crosswalks are particularly important at freeway ramps to alert drivers to pedestrian activity, and special attention should be given to this area to ensure safe crossings. Signals should be installed where appropriate and signal timing should be evaluated to provide pedestrians with a designated crossing period.

Public Art

The local arts community has expressed interest in creating public art in freeway underpass areas. Addition of murals and other graphic improvements to the walls under the freeway would enhance the neighborhood aesthetics and create gateways that express the unique character of the Spartan Keyes community. The City should assist the *Spartan Keyes Arts Coalition* to coordinate with Caltrans to obtain access to freeway underpasses for public art projects.

Homeless Population

Encampments

There are major concerns regarding homeless campsites in the remnant open spaces adjacent to I-280 at 10th and 11th Streets, in the alley between 7th and 8th Streets off Keyes, in cars under I-280, and along the Coyote Creek corridor. Residents feel that the constant presence of homeless detracts from community safety, contributes to blight, and gives the area an unsupervised character. An increase in homeless sweeps and strict enforcement of “no trespassing” laws should be considered to minimize permanent encampments and ensure the safety of residents. Overnight parking under I-280 should be restricted to prevent sleeping in cars, improving safety for pedestrians, especially children en route to school.



Unsupervised spaces, such as the alley off Keyes Street, tend to attract local homeless.

Access

Caltrans controls the right-of-way along I-280 where the three encampments areas noted above are located. The City should work with Caltrans to install fencing and/or other measures that would restrict access to these areas, while maintaining visual and physical access needed for police patrols.

Neighborhood Development

The *East Gardner Specific Plan* (EGSP) addresses policies for land use and development within the East Gardner area, which covers the western half of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Recommendations in this *Neighborhood Plan* expand upon the policies of the EGSP to address the entire Spartan Keyes community. The two plans will work together to establish neighborhood-oriented policies for development and implementation of the neighborhood improvements needed to create a vibrant, livable, urban community.

Public Facilities

Neighborhood Elementary School

Residents have expressed a strong desire for an elementary school within the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. Poor pedestrian access and perceived safety issues at bus stops make the existing elementary schools located outside the neighborhood less than desirable destinations for local children. In addition, the neighborhood is split between two district boundaries, with some children attending Lowell Elementary and others attending Washington Elementary. Proposed infill development will increase the demand for these existing schools, which could lead to overcrowding. Construction of a new school within Spartan Keyes would alleviate many of the current circulation problems, lessen the impact of new housing on existing schools, and create a hub for neighborhood-oriented activity. This could strengthen the community and create a support network for parents through participation in school-related activities and events. The City should coordinate with the San Jose Unified

School District to identify possible sites for a new elementary school and acquire funding for land acquisition and construction if feasible.

Arts-Oriented Uses

Over the years an arts community has become established in the Spartan Keyes neighborhood, specifically within the East Gardner area. Some of this activity is related to the arts program at San Jose State University, which uses a local building known as the Foundry for its metal casting and welding studio. A significant number of SJSU arts department faculty, staff, and students live in Spartan Keyes and nearby neighborhoods. This arts community should be encouraged to stay and expand within the East Gardner area. Arts groups, including the *Spartan Keyes Arts Coalition* and SJSU, have expressed an interest in providing arts programs for the community at large, particularly children. This area could become the center for growing and enriching the arts at a local level with much to be gained for the neighborhood as well as the artists themselves.

Arts related uses include private studio spaces, artists' lofts and other housing, small galleries, supply shops, rehearsal spaces, etc. The term "arts related" may also include neighborhood service uses, such as restaurants and cleaners that provide a necessary service for all residents of the area including artists. Large-scale uses, such as performance spaces, that may be intended to attract large audiences or participants from outside the surrounding neighborhood area, should be considered but limited. Focus should be on the creation of mixed-use environments, live/work spaces and community oriented educational centers. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings within the East Gardner area is strongly encouraged to house these desired arts-related uses.

Community Center

Residents have expressed an interest in having a community center for youth and teens within the neighborhood. This center should provide recreation opportunities, educational programs, as well as space for general community activities and functions. Residents are especially interested in providing a social outlet for neighborhood teens and school age children to encourage productive behavior and reduce loitering.

The construction of a community center should be considered in the master plan process for the park proposed in the East Gardner area, particularly within the historic buildings, or within the Story Road Landfill.

Land Use Policy

Auto/Light Industrial Uses

The Keyes Street corridor is a mix of commercial, light industrial and auto service businesses. The auto and light industrial businesses are generally unsightly, and generate noise, odor, and traffic issues that negatively affect residential property values within adjacent residential areas. The community has a specific issue with the self-service car wash on Keyes that is open 24 hours



Auto-related uses and businesses that are not community oriented should be phased out of the neighborhood.

a day. The constant activity at this business disrupts the neighborhood and adjacent properties. Residents would like to see the light industrial and auto related uses replaced with commercial businesses that better serve the community. Change of the current light industrial and general commercial *General Plan* and *Zoning* designations for Keyes Street should be considered to promote land uses that they are in line with the desires of the Spartan Keyes neighborhood. The City should work to phase out the existing auto-related services and light industrial uses, preferably through relocation to non-residential areas.

Neighborhood Oriented Commercial Uses

Residents have expressed a strong desire to establish a neighborhood-oriented commercial district along Keyes Street. There are only a few businesses that serve the surrounding community, forcing residents to leave the neighborhood for basic shopping needs as well as day-to-day commercial services. The addition of cafes, restaurants, dry cleaners, specialty grocery stores and specialty food markets would help to enliven the community, create a distinct neighborhood identity, reduce the need for auto trips outside the neighborhood, and add to neighborhood property values. City efforts should focus on incorporating and/or attracting business that serve local neighborhood needs and create pedestrian activity in evenings and on weekends. Existing local businesses that serve the neighborhood should be encouraged to remain, while businesses that are not, and/or are detrimental to the neighborhood, such as poorly managed bars and liquor stores, should be encouraged to close or relocate.

The City should consider extending the commercial designation boundary along Keyes Street to create deeper frontage parcels. This would help to attract desirable businesses and allow for a broader range of land uses than is possible with the current *General Plan* and *Zoning* designations. Recommendations for frontage expansion are presented in the graphic on the following page. It is important to note that the community is supportive of the expansion of the frontage over time and does not advocate the eviction of existing residential property owners.

A number of approaches should be pursued to improve the appearance of the existing commercial frontage along Keyes Street. The Redevelopment Agency sponsors a facade improvement program which provides for; paint, new signage, awnings, etc. Building improvements should be consistent with the desired neighborhood character and be governed by a set of neighborhood design guidelines. Redevelopment should also assist with improvements to parking areas, rear lots, service ways, and exterior lighting. Residents would also like to see businesses become more street friendly



Keyes Street is envisioned as a neighborhood-oriented business district with attractive buildings and streetscape improvements as shown in these examples.



- General Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Residential Support for the Core/
General Commercial
- Medium Density Residential
12-25 Du/Ac
- Medium Density Residential
8-16 Du/Ac
- Heavy Industrial
- Medium/Low Density Residential
8 Du/Ac
- Public/Quasi-Public

General Plan Designations

with the removal of large window and neon signs which block store interiors and clearly defined and attractive main entrances. New development should provide attractive storefronts with parking located to the side or back of the building to preserve the pedestrian streetscape.

A series of streetscape improvements have been proposed to make Keyes Street more attractive to the commercial businesses desired by the community. Street trees, pedestrian scale lighting and site furnishings such as bus stop benches and trash receptacles should be added to improve the pedestrian environment. New development should be set back from the roadway to increase the sidewalk depth and allow for the installation of amenities and provide space for outdoor seating.

In addition, residents would like to explore the possibility of adding a landscaped center median to distinguish Keyes Street as a unique commercial corridor. Initial design studies have determined that the installation of a median would require the removal of the existing bike lanes. Two design alternatives are shown on the following page demonstrating the possible future configuration of Keyes.

Warehouse/Light Industrial Buildings

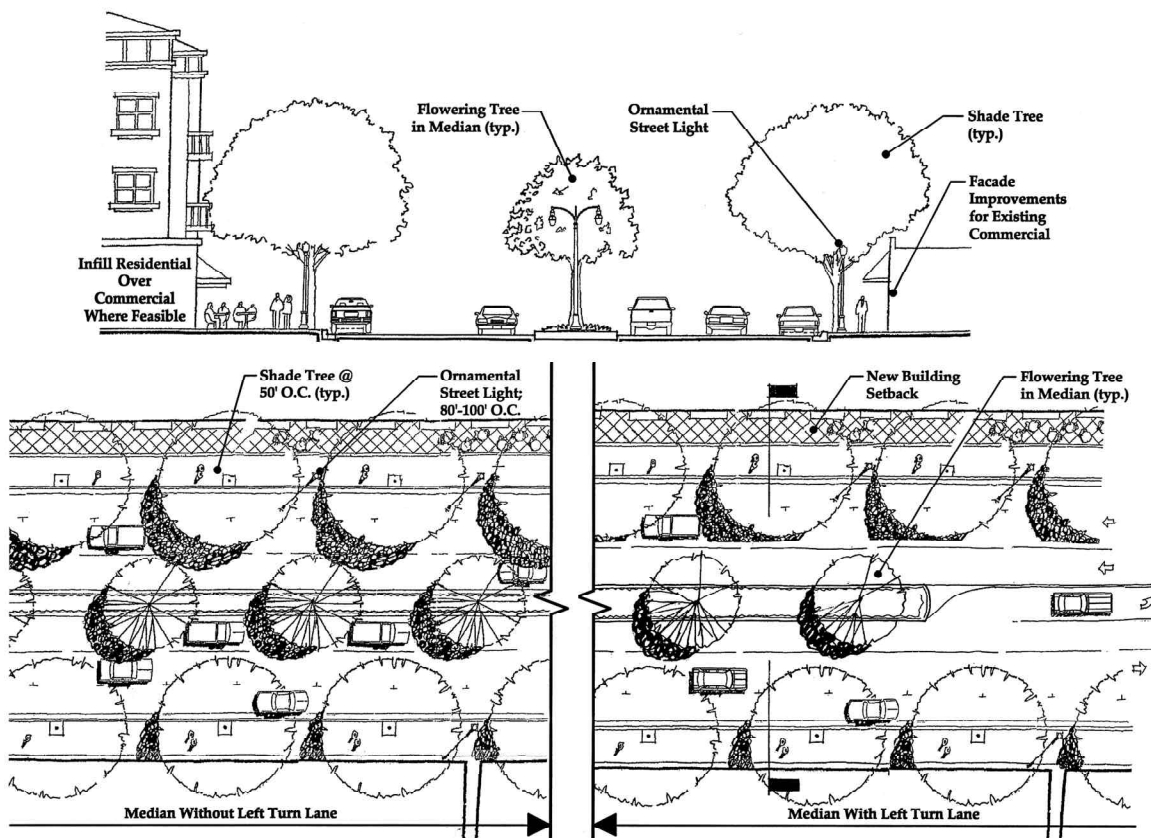
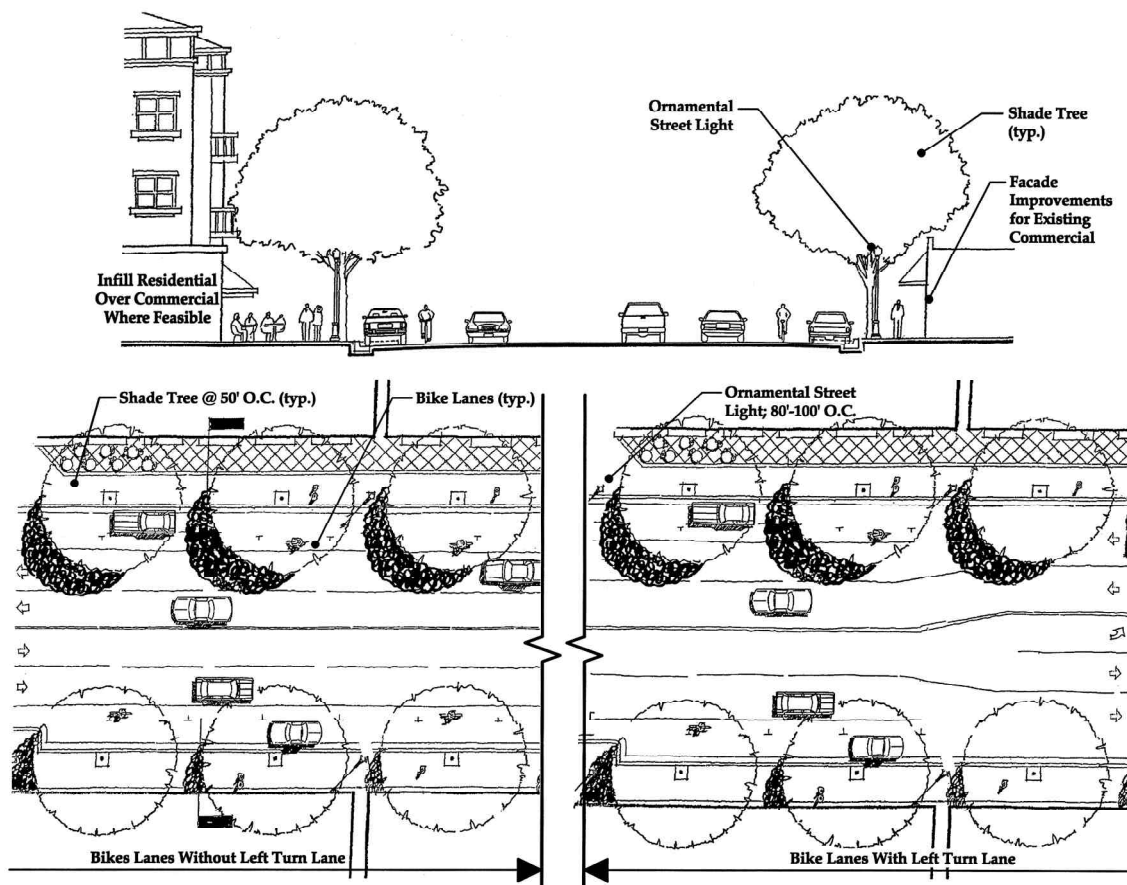
The East Gardner area has a significant collection of early-mid-20th Century buildings and associated structures, which are included in the City of San Jose's Historic Inventory. These buildings present an opportunity to imbue new development and the surrounding community with a unique historic character. Residents would like to see most or all of these buildings preserved and incorporated into redevelopment efforts. Warehouses can be reused for a wide range of residential, arts, crafts, community, commercial and other businesses. Development and the design of new buildings should borrow from the architectural character of this area to create a cohesive environment.



Industrial buildings such as the American Can Company should be renovated to accommodate community facilities and/or arts-related uses.

Infill Residential Development

The EGSP encourages redevelopment of a portion of the East Gardner area with higher-density housing that promotes neighborhood character. One goal of the EGSP is to achieve this level of density in a manner that fosters a sense of community. Improvements to the pedestrian environment, addition of neighborhood-oriented commercial and services, and the development of public open spaces are proposed to help achieve this vision. New housing will be oriented towards streets to provide connections to the public environment and the community. While much of the planned new development is focused in the East Gardner area, infill development should be considered along Keyes Street as well. Housing over retail development where feasible could provide the neighborhood-oriented commercial space desired by residents and contribute to the city wide housing need.



Keyes Street Improvement Alternatives